



**CANADIAN CENTER
FOR WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT**

**CENTRE CANADIEN
POUR L'AUTONOMISATION
DES FEMMES**

To be Released on February 8, 2024

Ottawa, January 10th, 2023

HEADLINE: EMPOWERING WOMEN: New App Combats Economic Abuse Amidst Rising Living Costs and Cases of Intimate Partner Violence

SUBHEADING: STEAR App (Support Tool for Economic Abuse Recovery), the first Canadian mobile app designed to ensure the economic safety and security of victims of financial and Economic Abuse.

In a major step forward in the fight against intimate Economic Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence, the highly anticipated digital tool is gearing up for its official release on February 8th.

In a 2021 CCFWE research study conducted in the Greater Ottawa region, it was observed that 30% of victims had their government support (ODSP, CERB, etc.) taken by abusers, and 93% of participating victim-survivors had their own money taken away from paychecks or financial aid. 84% had debt built up under their name, while over 90% had any financial decision-making power taken away from them.

Funded by the Government of Canada and WAGE, Support for Economic Abuse Recovery (STEAR) app is the first-ever Canadian mobile application designed to support victims. The app is a free, multilingual, and easy-to-use web and mobile-based app that centralizes safety, financial, and legal information for women who have experienced Intimate partner violence (IPV) and Economic Abuse. This app, which offers support in English, French, Arabic, Hindi and Urdu, provides users with a short questionnaire that will help guide them to the appropriate resources. STEAR will fill a gap for IPV victims and survivors to access vital resources on Economic Abuse.

In the face of the current financial crisis, marked by soaring living costs, housing crises, unprecedented inflation rates, and escalating prices of essential goods, women encountering abusive relationships confront significant obstacles to breaking free. CCFWE addresses these challenges by reclaiming digital spaces from online bullies and abusers.

*“Empowering survivors of Economic Abuse is not just a mission; it's a commitment to rebuilding lives. With this new multi-language digital mobile app, STEAR (**Supports for Economic Abuse Recovery**), we envision a future where every woman facing these challenges can easily access the support and resources needed to ensure economic*



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safety. This tool was developed through collaboration with survivors, taking into account various barriers women face in accessing services. Digital platforms play a pivotal role in creating and enhancing accessibility for support services for victims of IPV and financial and Economic Abuse. We are committed to the ongoing expansion of this tool and supporting service providers in their crucial roles. Inclusivity was a core focus. Thus, connecting with Crime Prevention Ottawa to incorporate diverse languages and cultural considerations was essential. Together, we're breaking barriers and creating a one-stop sanctuary, guiding them towards empowerment, resilience, and a brighter tomorrow", said **Meseret Haileyesus, Executive Director.**

Niha, CCFWE's Director, believed that, although collecting province-specific data would be hard work, it was important for CCFWE to launch a comprehensive product that could take advocacy work to new heights. She shares how her team prioritized user feedback, conducting surveys and interviews to shape a user-friendly interface with robust security measures. Collaboration with domestic violence organizations and technology experts ensures alignment with best practices. This comprehensive approach culminated in a powerful app designed to empower survivors on their journey to recovery.

The STEAR Mobile App is strategically crafted to change the game and the approach of social service providers, banking institutions, law enforcement, and victims of intimate partner violence in addressing the pervasive issue of Economic Abuse amidst this economic crisis. By providing a comprehensive platform, STEAR aims to empower individuals to navigate and overcome financial challenges associated with abusive relationships.

Launching Event:

The launch event for the STEAR app is scheduled for Thursday, February 8th, 2024, from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm via Zoom. Representatives from various government branches, social service providers from across the country, and Fintech experts will be present to celebrate this groundbreaking initiative.

To access the STEAR app and learn more about the Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment, visit <https://stear.app/>.

Event registration is available here:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/unveiling-stear-tickets-794965151167?aff=oddtcreator>

About the Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE):

The Canadian Centre for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE) is the only non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women and addressing issues related to gender-based violence. With



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a mission to create a society where women thrive, the center focuses on providing resources, support, and advocacy to foster positive change.

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To learn more, visit our website at www.ccfwe.org.